

Why Pray - Ephesians 1:15-23 – January 28th, 2018

- I've titled today's teaching, "Why Pray."
- Here in our text, it's as if Paul has turned a corner, going from talking to them about the Lord, to talking to the Lord about them.
- What I find interesting about this is it's not so much that Paul prayed for them, it's more when and what Paul prayed for them.
- It's when Paul heard about their faith in the Lord and their love for God's people, that he never stopped thanking God for them.
- Then in verse seventeen Paul says that he kept asking that God would give them wisdom and revelation to know Him better.
- In verses 18-21, he says he prayed that the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened to the hope to which God called them.
- And, in the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people, and His incomparable and matchless power for us who believe.
- He then goes further describing God's great power as being the same mighty strength He exerted to raise Christ from the dead.
- Not only did this power raise Christ from the dead it also seated Him at His right hand in heaven far above all demonic powers.
- Specifically, rulers, authorities, powers, and dominions, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present, but all eternity.
- In verses 22-23, Paul ends by declaring that God placed all things under Christ's feet appointing Him the head over everything.
- Namely, as the head of the church, which is His body, and is His fullness, and in so doing He then fills everything in every way.
- That's when Paul prayed, and that's what Paul prayed, but what's so fascinating is why Paul prayed what he prayed for them.
- I'm hoping you'll kindly indulge me for the remainder of our time together here in Ephesians, as I answer this "why" question.
- I am keenly aware I run the risk of an oversimplification saying this, but the answer to why pray is because of Who we pray to.
- Doubtless, you've heard it said, "It's not so much what you know, it's who you know," and certainly this bares true with prayer.

There's an interesting story that's told of Alexander the Great. While known for conquering the entire "known world," of his time, what's not so well known is that he was compassionate towards his people. As the story goes, he set aside one day a year and called it, "Compassionate Day," in which he would randomly select people across his kingdom and allow them to ask the king for a special request that he would grant – whatever it was! What's so interesting is that most people would only ask for such things as food, clothes, money for medicine and the like. That is until one particular year, when a peasant requested that he be given a large palace, with a large banquet hall so he could host large meals for all his friends. To the astonishment of all present that day, Alexander granted his request. When the king's men asked him why he would grant this man's extravagant request, Alexander the Great told them that all the people are asking for mundane things could ask just anyone to give them. They don't need a king to give them such things. Anyone with extra goods could do that. "But a king...for the first time, this man has made me feel like the king I am. For only a king could grant such a request!"

- Here's the question that's before every one of us today, "when we do pray, presupposing that we pray, do we ask for too little?"
- Please know that I in no way wish to lay a heavy weight on any of us, myself included, but do we realize Who we're praying to?
- The scriptures are replete with promise after promise; God will give us anything we ask Him for if it's for our good and His will.

1 John 5:14–15 -- 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

Romans 8:32 -- He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

James 1:17 -- Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Matthew 7:7–11 -- 7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!